

Every suitable rock or flat area which the sun reached had several earwigs per square metre. The investigated area covered at least 100 x 100m (10,000m²), but there must have been earwigs over a larger area than that. A total of 5,000 is an absolute minimum, but the true total must have been considerably higher than that. I made no formal count, but the sex-ratio appeared to be roughly 1:1, the sexes being easily distinguished by the shape of the anal tongs.

Discussion

Hilltopping of this nature is normally seen as a way of allowing the sexes of a species to meet for mating purposes, and this has been carefully documented for both butterflies (Lepidoptera, Rhopalocera) and hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae). This may have been so also in the present case; my brief stay was possibly too short to see examples of sexual behaviour.

Another possibility is that the hilltopping constitutes a prelude to communal hibernation. Ladybirds of the type seen are notorious for communal roosting, and often in places where they do not normally live and feed. Many of the small stinking bugs were seen further down the mountain in shady places in very large numbers (more than 100 under the palm-sized ledge of a small rock).

However, a conversation with Judith Marshall on the habits of earwigs in the UK, suggests that both mechanisms may actually be combined, since here females are impregnated in the autumn and hibernate to lay eggs the following spring, while the males die off.

Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the earwigs were hilltopping, that they flew frequently, spontaneously, and quite strongly, and that they were present by the thousands or tens of thousand.

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Pyrausta aurata Scop. (Lep.: Pyralidae) on Wanstead Flats, east London, 1996

I first became aware of the existence of this Pyrale in east London in October 1994, having found larvae on a small cluster of *Mentha* growing in a tiny Plaistow garden on 8.x.1994.

A Heath trap set up on 30.v.1996 on Wanstead Flats, resulted in the capture of a single male. Subsequent examples of the moth, the first

4.vi.1996, were found flying in sunshine in my untidy garden by Wanstead Flats, which was graced by a small batch of mint in one corner. An initial female was seen in the vicinity of the aforementioned plants on 5.vi.1996, flying at 12.30 hours, depositing a single ovum on the underside of a mint leaf near the mid-rib. Other examples were seen on 9.vi.1996, 15.vi.1996 and 20.iv.1996, generally flying in the sunshine around midday. Larvae of various stadia were first noted on mint, 20.vi.1996. Larvae were seen to be relatively abundant on 14.vii.1996, always on the same few mint plants, feeding in close proximity to each other, spinning webs on the terminal shoots.

A single example of *P. aurata* was also seen in nearby West Ham Park on 15.v.1996, flying in close proximity to the mints which formed part of the herb garden. No larvae were seen here.

Larvae were fully-grown on 19.vii.1996, the last being noted on 27.vii.1996, and imagines were seen flying until 18.viii.1996, their numbers being added to by those specimens released into the garden from 27.vii.1996.

The diurnal nature of the insect, and its propensity to fly in bright sunshine, was no doubt encouraged by the favourable weather conditions of June and July (see Table).

month	deviation 30 - year norms °C, 1951-1980	sunshine % deviation, 30-year norms
June 1996	+0.8°C	119%
July 1996	+0.8°C	112%

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Fletcher's Pug versus Pauper Pug

I fear that Bernard Skinner had his tongue firmly in his cheek when he wrote on this matter (*Ent. Rec.* **108**: 284-285); he knows better than most that Heslop's use of the name Pauper Pug for *egenaria* related absolutely to last century mis-identifications of similar species and that such a name had no place in the British literature. Moths of *Eupithecia egenaria* H.-S. were recognised for the first time in Britain from wild populations in 1962, and the significance of the two vernacular names was not lost on Robin Mere (1962, *Ent. Gaz.* **13**: 155), and I re-stated this position (1981, *Larvae Brit. Lep. not figd. by Buckler*: 34) and summarised it again in the recent Newsletter no. 49 of the Norfolk Moth Survey Group (which three sources I recommend to interested readers).

We had all been seduced since 1984 by the alliterative ease with which Pauper Pug popped from the tongue; and the fact that successive authors